

The Whole Thing

It's criminal, criminal,
said she
whose son
was some time
dead,

He was so vulnerable
and they got him.

What she got was
notification
no details, very straightforward
later a visit from me:

who had seen
him get it
without him knowing it,
as if some treacherous nurse
just picked him out,
humming into his blood
the last tranquilizer.

Stiffly
he subsided
no grace even in death
but a good heart --
which I stressed, giving
no details

although
the whole thing
played back in my mind
like a newsreel,
grainy film even,
the boy dying
the whole time her going
criminal, criminal.

As I left
(she put me through hell
just a courtesy call
the distant son dead for weeks)

the old lady spliced
onto the whole sick thing,
singing soundtrack
to her son
the newsreel hero
STOP

I told myself
SHUT THAT DAMN
CAMERA OFF
THERE'S FILM ALL OVER
THE PLACE